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THE
Eloquence of St. Paul.

BY

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It is more than questionable whether, if the apostle Paul had been tried by the technical rules of the rhetoricians of his day, he would have been pronounced an eloquent man. Though able to speak the Hebrew, the Greek and the Latin, the three languages of antiquity in which nearly all that was worth knowing in his day was written or spoken, and though called upon, by his itinerant ministry, to address audiences gathered from all ranks of society, and of the most diverse religious views and grades of intellectual culture, it is remarkable that, beyond a few suggestive facts and allusions, we know little or nothing of the apostle's peculiar style of speaking. This is all the more noteworthy when we remember that he frequently had among his auditors, if they did

not compose the entire assembly, the fastidious and polished Greeks, who gloried in nothing more than in their incomparably excellent and mellifluous language, and in the art of speaking it with the greatest purity and fluency. How much they gloried in "the enticing words of man's wisdom" and the "excellency of speech," is more than once alluded to by the apostle Paul. Yet even these fastidious Greeks, among whom Paul had many disciples, have not left us any critical estimate of the oratorical ability of the great apostle. They tell us much about the ten Attic orators, approved by the school of Alexandria; about the masterly eloquence of Demosthenes and his rival Æschines; the almost supernatural sweetness and beauty of the oratory of Isocrates, but of a later orator who addressed them more frequently and more effectively than any one of their illustrious speakers, we have little beyond a few rather depreciative and characteristic criticisms. This very silence, however, may afford us a hint of something peculiar and masterly in the oratory of St. Paul. The Greek orators sought to please. They addressed the eye, the ear, the critical judgment and exacting taste of their auditors. With "enticing words," with the "excellency of speech or of wisdom," they sought to carry away captive the precise but superficial judgments of a people who spent their time either in hearing or telling some new or smooth or beautiful thing. The people demanded something that would amuse or please or entertain, and the orators sought to meet the demand.

Paul came among these gay and ambitious triflers with a most sober purpose, and upon a mission of the most momentous importance. Passing by alike their rhetoric and their philosophy, their "excellency of speech" and their "wisdom," as equally vain; he determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified." When he essayed to address these polite critics upon a theme which appeared to their "wisdom" to be "foolishness," he did not adopt the prevailing oratory any more than the prevailing philosophy, for both seemed to adhere together, but used a method becoming the simple grandeur of his subject, so that their faith might

not stand in "the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." With a soul thoroughly penetrated by the great truths he came to deliver, he spake to them not only upon a new theme, but with an unwonted power. Passing by all such mere trifles as studied verbiage and elocutionary artifices, he at once sought to convince the judgment with unanswerable truth and to pierce the conscience with the sword of the Spirit; to "open the eyes" of men, "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive the forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith"—the faith that had delivered his own soul. Instead of addressing the eye and tickling the ear and amusing the fancy, in his own language, he sought, "by manifestation of the truth, to commend himself to every man's *conscience* in the sight of God." Now the conscience does not criticise; when a man can get hold of that, he at once disarms all criticism and puts his hearer in an attitude the most widely different from that of the cold critic. None of those three thousand who were "pricked in their heart" by the flaming sword of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, were capable of remembering a single gesture or intonation of the principal preacher on that occasion. You might as well expect a man, wounded in a hand to hand fight in the day of battle, to be able to sit down and criticise the manner in which the enemy drew and brandished and plunged the sword into his body, dwelling chiefly upon the grace or awkwardness of the movement, as to expect a man wounded in conscience to describe the inflections and gestures and attitudes of the speaker whilst that searching work was going on. Who can believe for a moment that Felix, pale and trembling, as if in the presence of the supreme Judge, knew anything about the rhetoric of the master who had conjured up before his affrighted imagination and guilty conscience the retributions of the last day? It would be scarcely more absurd to suppose that he would be capable of criticising the pronunciation, emphasis and gesture of the Judge himself in the act of cursing and exiling him into outer darkness forever, than to suppose that in the awful moment of his alarm he could

have criticised the elocution of the apostle. About all we know of the great missionary's preaching, is the *effect* which he everywhere produced. He disarmed the critics by attacking them at a point where all criticism refuses to judge. Himself forgetful of all studied artificialities of speech, he spoke in a manner the least adapted to awaken the critical propensity in his hearers. He rose above the arts and technicalities of the schools, and moved in a region so elevated that men thought as little of pointing their impotent shafts of criticism at him as the huntsman thinks of drawing his bow upon an eagle in the clouds.

We are reminded, however, that some did dare to criticise the apostle. The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers at Athens thought him a *babbler*, and some Corinthians said of him, "His letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak and his *speech contemptible*." As to the first class of critics, it may be said their judgment related to the matter rather than the manner of the apostle's preaching. It was the foolishness of the gospel, rather than that of the preacher, that offended them. Not perhaps being orators themselves, but "philosophers" rather, they would naturally look more into the substance of the message than at its rhetorical dress. It was the strange doctrine of "Jesus and the resurrection" that seemed to them an unintelligible babble. The discourteous appellation, *Σπερμολογος*, "babbler," literally, a "seed-gather," spoken of birds that pick up the seed when it is sown, is sometimes applied to a man who speaks, as one sows seeds, without order or connection. Now it was the want of a discernible logic, and not a defective rhetoric, that called forth the depreciative philosophic judgment on this occasion. When, however, it is said of the apostle's *speech* that it was "*contemptible*," it will be urged that here is an adverse criticism upon the rhetoric of the speaker. It is possible that this may have been the intended force of the hostile judgment. The contrast drawn between the speaking and the writing of the apostle, rather favors this interpretation. It is not unlikely that the apostle, being "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," educated in Jerusalem, did not speak the

Greek with entire accuracy, fluency and purity. There may have been an inelegant brogue upon his tongue, and this would no doubt be sufficient to condemn him in Corinth as a "contemptible" orator. His deficiency in this respect, may have been, at least in part, the reason for his reference to his "speech" in his letter to this people. But his reference is made in the style of an apology, which, whilst it serves to relieve him, comes very near turning back upon his critics the charge that, in his judgment, *their* "speech" is contemptible. Besides, we must remember that this judgment of Paul is pronounced by *enemies*, and hence does not prove him a bad speaker any more than some other charges from the same class prove him a bad man.

From the criticism last noticed, and a passage from his letter to the Galatians, and a few others of kindred type, a great mass of tradition and conjecture has been manufactured, tending to depreciate both the person and the oratory of St. Paul. That the apostle confesses some physical infirmity which was obvious to the eyes of men, and which subjected him to severe trial, seems to be evident from the following: "Ye know how through *infirmity of the flesh* I preached the gospel unto you at the first, and of my *temptation which is in the flesh*, ye despised not, nor rejected, but received me even as an angel of God, even as Jesus Christ." This, together with the enigmatical "thorn in the flesh," which has been such a thorn to curious commentators, is the small stock in trade with which a class of ingenious and mostly minute critics have carried on such a various business in the way of manufacturing likenesses of St. Paul. It is fair to say that not one of those who has drawn his conception of Paul from the allusions made to his "infirmities," without the corrections and qualifications necessarily implied in his laborious and long life, has given us anything more than a contemptible caricature. If we accept the figure made of St. Paul by early tradition and ingenious speculation, it will be next to impossible, with such a weak bodily presence, to make a speaker who will not be "contemptible."

For if, as Blair says, "a not ungainly presence and a full

and tunable voice are important qualifications" to the public speaker, then, tradition being true, Paul had not at least the first of these qualifications. Chrysostom says that "his stature was low, his body crooked, his head bald, and he was only three cubits high," but adds, with great beauty and force of expression, that "he was tall enough to touch the heavens." Jerome says, "his constitution was infirm, and he was much afflicted with headache." This is outdone by an equally authentic expression of Lucian, who, in his *Philopatris*, calls him, "the high-nosed, bald-pated Galilean," and adds, "*Corpore erat parvo contracto, incurvo, tricubitali.*" Tradition describes him as a man of low stature and inclining to stoop, of a grave countenance and a fair complexion. His eyes were possessed of a certain suavity of expression, his nose was gracefully aquiline, his forehead nearly bald, his beard thick and, as he advanced in years, like the hair of his head, somewhat silvered by age." We cannot imagine such a dwarfish, ungainly, distorted physique as this, "a chosen vessel," adapted to endure the herculean labors which he performed, and "bear the name of the Lord before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel." A man who could endure to old age, then die a death of violence, the "journeying often," the perils of robbers by his own countrymen, the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren; his weariness, painfulness, watchings often, hunger, thirst, fasting, cold, nakedness, the daily care of all the churches, besides the persecutions, labors more abundant, stripes above measure, his imprisonments, deaths oft, his one hundred and ninety-five stripes from the Jews, together with his, "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep," was hardier than Hannibal, tougher than Cæsar, had more endurance than Buonaparte, and was braver than all of them put together. To say of such a man that his "bodily presence is *weak*," is in contradiction not only of all the analogies of fact and experience, but of physiological law.

If the critic spoke a probable untruth when he said "his bodily presence is *weak*," it is probable he was equally un-

truthful when he said his "speech is contemptible." If his labors and sufferings imply a strong body, the effects of his speaking, and the products of his pen, imply a strong mind and vigorous elocution. There are recorded of him no such feats of physical manliness as of intellectual prowess and achievement. If we are not to make him a prodigious anomaly, reversing all the ordinary facts of experience, then we ought to conceive of Paul as a man of extraordinary compactness and proportion of physical structure, "a chosen vessel" indeed, just such a man as God would likely make to do the most heroic and responsible labor ever allotted to a human being. Allowing much for the representations of modesty and true humility in his account of "the infirmities which were in his flesh," we may consistently say he was a physical as he was an intellectual giant. But be this as it may. We have something more significant than the silence of habitual critics, and the impotent carpings of personal enemies. Suppose his bodily presence *was* weak, we know, of a truth, his speech was not contemptible. On the contrary, we know it was admirable. It is a model for all who, like him, are preaching "Jesus and the resurrection," and are beseeching men, as though God did beseech them by their ministry, to become reconciled unto God.

There are several indispensable and pre-eminent qualifications which an effective speaker must have, and Paul had these in an extraordinary degree.

1. The first is a clear apprehension of the subject about which one is to speak. "*Clearness, force, earnestness,*" said an eminent American orator, "these are the qualities which produce conviction." That Paul had a clear vision of his subject, need not be argued. A man of his acuteness of intellect, enlightened and inspired by the Holy Spirit, could not apprehend the truth doubtfully. Jesus and his gospel were revealed not only *to* him, but *in* him, and he could not but speak that which he knew, and testify that he had seen. It is true, there are some things in his writing which, as Peter said, are "hard to be understood," but this arises from the obscurity and grandeur of the subject, the na-

ture of our faculties, and not from any obscurity in the style of the apostle. Human speech was often burdened, and sometimes plainly incompetent to set forth many of the mysteries of the gospel, and if it seemed to stoop and to labor and, like a giant under a great load, to lose its ease and grace of movement, it was due to the weakness of the medium and the burden of the subject, and not to any want of skill or clearness in the mind of him who employed it as the vehicle of his ideas. Paul was capable of digressions, parentheses and abruptness in style, but not of weakness, obscurity or inaccuracy. Indeed he seems to have combined in himself all the excellencies of the other sacred writers. "He had the loftiness of Isaiah, the devotion of David, the pathos of Jeremiah, the vehemence of Ezekiel, the didactic gravity of Moses, the elevated morality and practical good sense of James, the sublime conceptions and deep views of John, the noble energy and burning zeal of Peter. To all these he added his own strong argumentative powers and intensity of thought."

2. He had also "force, earnestness." These were pre-eminent among other good qualities. Reversing the order of these words, and putting them in the relation of cause and effect, we would say that the apostle had great force because he had great earnestness. As heat gives expansive force to water in the form of steam, so does earnestness in the soul give energy to every one of its faculties. The apostle was the subject of an earnestness that not only aroused all the faculties of his being, but set them into such energy of motion as seemed almost to kindle them into a flame by their own rapidity of movement. "From the moment of his conversion, on the way to Damascus, he had but one object of existence, and that was the glory of God in the salvation of souls, and but one way of seeking it, and that was by preaching the cross. Wherever he went, whatever he did, to whomsoever he spoke, he was watching for souls. Whether reasoning with the Jews in their synagogues, or discoursing with the philosophers on Mars Hill, or preaching to the voluptuous inhabi-

tants of Corinth, or appealing to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, or pleading in chains the cause of Christianity at the tribunal of Festus in the presence of Agrippa, or writing letters from prison to the churches he had planted, we find him everywhere, and always, the earnest minister of Jesus Christ.”*

This clearness of vision, and this feeling of earnestness, gave Paul’s addresses three qualities essential to all effective speaking, *pertinence, practicalness and persuasiveness*.

1. The preaching of Paul was *pertinent*. He always spoke to the point. He shunned not to declare unto his hearers “the whole counsel of God,” and “kept back nothing that was profitable.” Hence his discourses were as various in matter as the variety of subjects he discussed. Then, too, his audiences were widely diverse from each other. He addressed all classes, among both Jews and Gentiles. He plead the cause of Christ before kings and governors, and discoursed before the ignorant multitude. He preached the Christ of Moses and the prophets before the Sanhedrim of his own people; and the doctrine of “Jesus and the resurrection” before the scoffing philosophers of Athens, and was not ashamed to preach the same gospel at Rome also. But aiming ever more at one thing, he did not fail to adapt his discourses to the condition, education, habits of thought, and even the prejudices of men. “I am made all things to all men, that I might* by all means save some.” To the Jews he became a Jew, that he might save the Jews. Consequently he professed, and that sincerely, a profound respect for the laws and institutions of Moses. Were his hearers “of the seed of Abraham,” so was he, and he addressed them as his kinsmen, “fathers and brethren.” He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee; brought up at the feet of Gamaliel and taught “according to the perfect manner of the law.” He reasoned with them out of their own scriptures, and “taught none other things than Moses and the prophets did say should come.” He is compelled to appeal to Cæsar

*An Earnest Ministry, by John A. James.

but not that he has "aught to accuse his nation of." Every where it was for "the hope of Israel that he is bound with this chain." Thus to the Jews he became a Jew.

But he was "the apostle of the Gentiles." In preaching to them, his grand theme and purpose are the same, but his style and manner are very different. He does not reason with the heathen out of the Jewish scriptures. He opens before them the larger and older volume of nature, having the same origin and teaching, so far as it goes, the same lessons with Moses and the prophets. With the Lycaonians who would sacrifice to him and Barnabars as to Jupiter and Mercurius, Paul reasoned about "the living God which made heaven and earth, and all things that are therein," and spoke of "the rain from heaven and fruitful seasons," and thus dissuaded these ignorant barbarians from idolatrous sacrifice to "serve the living God." At Athens he takes for his text, not a selection from Moses or the prophets, but an inscription upon one of their altars, and reveals to them the character and claims of that very Deity whom they unconsciously and ignorantly worshipped, citing as testimony against their superstition the sentiments of their own poets.

If he reasons with Felix, or Festus, or Agrippa, standing in the courts of the great, and addressing the learned, his whole demeanor is courtly and his speech is elevated and refined. If he addresses the ignorant multitude in some remote village, his manner is plain and his speech is simple. With the faithful and teachable, he is gentle, "even as a nurse cherisheth her children." But with the "puffed up" and refractory, he uses "sharpness" and even speaks of the "rod" as a possible necessity. If any wandered out of the way, being ignorantly misled by false teachers, he deals gently, in "meekness instructing those that oppose themselves," rebuking with all "long-suffering and doctrine." But he could also deliver the headstrong and unruly to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that they might learn not to blaspheme. Paul, in his dealings with all classes of men, manifests a happy union of two almost incompatible characters, a universal and flexible adaptation with an intense personal consistency and integrity

of character. "This one thing I do," is made to harmonize with, "I am made all things to all men," and both are made necessary by his all-commanding purpose, that "by all means he might save some."

2. Paul's preaching was *practical*. James is often called the practical and Paul the doctrinal writer. The discrimination is just, but if by this be meant that the doctrines of Paul are not practical, then it is not. It is true that Paul is the most doctrinal of all the apostles, but it is equally true, and that, too, on this very account, that he is the most eminently practical. His work was largely initial. He laid the foundation and others built thereon. He planted, others cultivated and reaped what he sowed. It was his ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not named, and not merely to build on the work of others. This necessitated indoctrination. He was compelled to deal in first principles, and hence we have much didactic and polemic theology in his epistles. This fact, too, is unfavorable to the exhibition of the higher degrees of impassioned utterance. He could not charm the Jews into an acceptance of the crucified Nazarene as the Messiah, by mere bursts of eloquence. He must reason and demonstrate — "opening and alleging" from Moses and the prophets, the misunderstood proofs of Christ's divine mission, offices and work. Nor could he conquer the prejudices of the ignorant heathen, or overcome the speculations of their philosophers by mere denunciation or confident assertion. His duty to the one class required him to use great plainness of speech, to the other great acumen and depth of argument. In neither case was he permitted to indulge in mere flights of fancy or bursts of declamation. Hence we find the apostle engaged largely in reasoning, teaching, proving, all of which necessitated deliberate, didactic plainness of speech. But in all this elaboration of argument and doctrinal exposition, the apostle kept in view the practical uses of this teaching. He never indulged in speculations for the purpose of showing his ingenuity, or in argument for the purpose of defeating an opponent, or in science or philosophy for the purpose of captivating his hearers or gratifying his own ambition. On

the contrary, he subordinated everything to practical results. He discusses the doctrine of depravity, but only that he may show how God hath concluded all, both Jews and Gentiles, under sin, that he may have mercy upon all. Thus he would overthrow the righteousness which is of the law, exclude boasting, and use the law as a school-master to bring men to Christ. He reasons grandly about the mysterious doctrines of divine sovereignty, election, foreordination, but not ambitiously and speculatively, but for the purpose of showing the relations of Jews and Gentiles to the Church of God, the "good olive tree," and thus their relations to each other. He would uphold the Jew who seemed like a branch broken off from his own tree, and caution the Gentile, who had been grafted into his place, against pride and contempt of his unfortunate brother, and lead all, with himself, to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out."

He elaborates the doctrine of the resurrection, answers curious questions about "How are the dead raised and with what bodies do they come," but only as a means of reaching and enforcing his conclusion. "*Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Among the heathen he alludes to the arms of the soldiers, the races and boxing and wrestling of the *athletæ*, but the conclusion is one of the most earnest practical exhortations to be found in all his epistles: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: above all, taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

3. The apostle's preaching was *persuasive*. The object of

his whole ministry, as he beautifully and emphatically informs us, was to "*persuade* men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God." Concluding his long and masterly argument stretching over the first eleven chapters of Romans, he says, "I beseech you therefore; brethren, by the mercies of God," &c. Not only when speaking of the "mercies of God" did the apostle use persuasion, but also in connection with such views of the character and dealings of God as would rather terrify than persuade. Where the mere declaimer grows harsh and denunciatory, Paul melts into pity and entreaty. "Knowing the terrors of the Lord," said he, "we *persuade* men." Paul evidently had a tenderness of heart and manner that gave all his preaching the predominating quality of persuasiveness. It modulated his voice, softened his features, suffused his eyes, and gave his whole manner the expression of one who loved men with an intensity of sanctified devotion. A man who could truly say, "Remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one of you, night and day, with tears;" and, in dealing with such characters as some of those were whom he found in the Corinthian church, "I wrote unto you with many tears"—and, to the Philippians, "I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ"—must have had a heart as tender, and a manner of dealing with men as full of sympathy, as a loving mother shows in her management of her children. If now, with this sympathy you will unite the sturdy manliness of one of the bravest of heroes, you will have a character uniting strength with tenderness to a degree that will give him an almost sovereign control over the hearts of men. These are the very qualities which give a speaker what we call magnetic power. With this power Paul could blanch the cheek of an audacious Roman procurator, and win kisses and parting tears from friends rendered almost inconsolable by his departure. Dionysius, contrasting the effects produced by the speeches of the two most illustrious orators Greece ever produced, said, "When Demosthenes spoke he inspired the hearer with all the passions incident to humanity, and filled the breast with an agitation as fierce as that

which raged among the initiated during the celebration of the mystic rites of Cybele. But when Isocrates spoke, he left the hearer in a contemplative mood, as if he had been listening to the strains of the finest music." Paul united the power of the former to agitate, as is proved by the case of Felix and others, with that of the latter to soothe and inspire, as is evident from many cases, both in the Acts and his Epistles, where he appears like one standing with beautiful feet upon the mountains bringing glad tidings and publishing peace.

One thing is certain, he always moved his audiences, and sometimes most powerfully. It was impossible for men to go away from his speaking in an indifferent manner. If they did not agree with him, and submit to the gospel and become disciples, they were put upon some effort of defence, explanation or opposition. On a day appointed at Rome, many Jews came to his lodging "to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law and out of the prophets, from morning until evening." It is no slight compliment to a preacher to be able to keep an audience interested as long as that. "And some believed the things which were spoken and some believed not." When this wonderful day's work was done, the people did not retire satisfied, but "had great reasoning among themselves." Even at Athens there were "certain who clave unto him and believed," and "others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." After his sermon in the synagogue at Antioch, in Pisidia, the people were so moved that on "the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." The Lycaonians thought that Paul was one of their superior deities, "because he was the chief speaker." Listening to him, the Jews became so excited that "they cried out and cast off their clothes and threw dust into the air." Felix trembled before him, Agrippa was almost persuaded to become a Christian, Festus thought much learning had made him mad. A man so capable of arousing and exciting men of all classes, and filling society with commotion wherever he went, even to such an extent as

to give color to the exaggeration that he was turning "the world upside down," was a man of no contemptible powers of speaking. There have been many eloquent preachers since his day, but the world has not yet seen his equal. The very planet feels his tread, the air yet vibrates with his speech, and his influence is felt throughout the world. There are a few reflections which may appropriately follow this concise view of the eloquence of St. Paul.

1. *From Paul one may learn what and how to preach.* He made his hearers think more of the message and of its claims upon them, than of the messenger.

When Louis the XIV. heard Massillon, he said, "When I hear other preachers I usually go home *praising them*, but when I hear you, I go away *condemning myself*." Paul's preaching was a perpetual confirmation of his noble assertion: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake." Like a planet near the sun, St. Paul stood so near the cross that he was lost in the brightness of its glory. He never thought, for the purpose of revealing himself, of making a transit of his little opaque self across the disc of its glory. He was content to be near and lost in its brightness. We see the *man* in his largest figure only when we stand with our backs to the cross, as we see the full moon when we stand with our backs to the sun. The place of Paul as a preacher is revealed by the very obscurity that rests upon him. To have had a critical and commendatory estimate of his oratory, would have located him in the opposite point of the heavens from where we find him. "Nor of men sought we glory, nor of you, nor of others—God is witness."

One of the saddest spectacles which Heaven beholds on earth, is that of a preacher before an audience of immortal beings, ambitious of their applause, attempting by attitude, gesture, tone, trope, and figure, to excite admiration of himself and

Play his brilliant parts before their eyes

When they are starving for the bread of life !

Scarcely less sad is that of an audience of candidates for eter-

nity sitting for an hour to speculate on the preacher, to watch his motions, to be delighted with the melody of his voice, the smoothness and grandeur of his periods, the sprightly images of his fancy, and go away remembering only what they should never have noticed, and praising only what they should have condemned.

Let such preachers and audiences bethink themselves, and see if they be not described in the language of the prophet: "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before me as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after covetousness. And lo! thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument, for they hear thy words but they do them not."

2. From Paul we learn the end of preaching. It is to persuade men to be reconciled to God. To do this, preaching must be pertinent, practical and persuasive. No man ought to preach on such subjects as are not cognate and closely connected with the cross of Christ. No doubt a relation may be shown between Jesus Christ and him crucified, and all questions of science, philosophy, history and government; for the cross of Christ is the sun and moral centre of the universe, and everything, in some sort of an orbit, revolves around it. But the orbits, in many cases, are so remote and withal so ill defined, and the inter-spaces so dark and cold, that we are lost in trying to thread "the illimitable way." It is well to stay near home and leave speculation to the philosophers and professors of theology. It is the preacher's business to preach a gospel that will save, and in a manner adapted to his hearers. Some he must save "with fear pulling them out of the fire," of others he must "have compassion, making a difference." Thus his preaching will be *pertinent*.

He must be *practical*. He ought to preach not only to demonstrate a truth, to defend an article of the creed or to silence an objector, but to enforce duty, inspire devotion and make men obedient to God as dear children. Paul never pushed

his speculations beyond the limits of practice, and did not lose the Christian in the Philosopher.

A minister must *persuade*. Even when preaching the terrors of the law, he ought to persuade men. Paul preached but little about hell. The word itself does not occur in any of his discourses or epistles. There was fire in his preaching, but it was that which melted rather than consumed. The harsh and unfeeling way in which the doctrine concerning hell has often been preached, has done much to make men despise or disbelieve the gospel. "I tell you even *weeping*," said the apostle, "that they are enemies of the cross."

3. If such ought the minister to be, what ought to be the hearers? Shall he be *pertinent*, and they become offended when they feel the application of the gospel, and become his enemies because he has told them the truth? When he urges the claims of duty and would make them practical Christians, shall they turn his discourses into a subject of vain curiosity or idle speculation? Shall a minister spend and be spent for his hearers; shall he count no labor, or study, or suffering, too great to be endured for them, so that, being exceedingly desirous of them, he is willing to "impart to them, not the gospel of God only, but his own life also, because they are dear unto him," and they have no concern for themselves, no care for their minister, and no solicitude for the salvation of those who have not the gospel? "Let him that readeth understand."